MARVEL 2

SCHULTZ · SALAZAR · LOPEZ

23 DEADLY REGENESIS

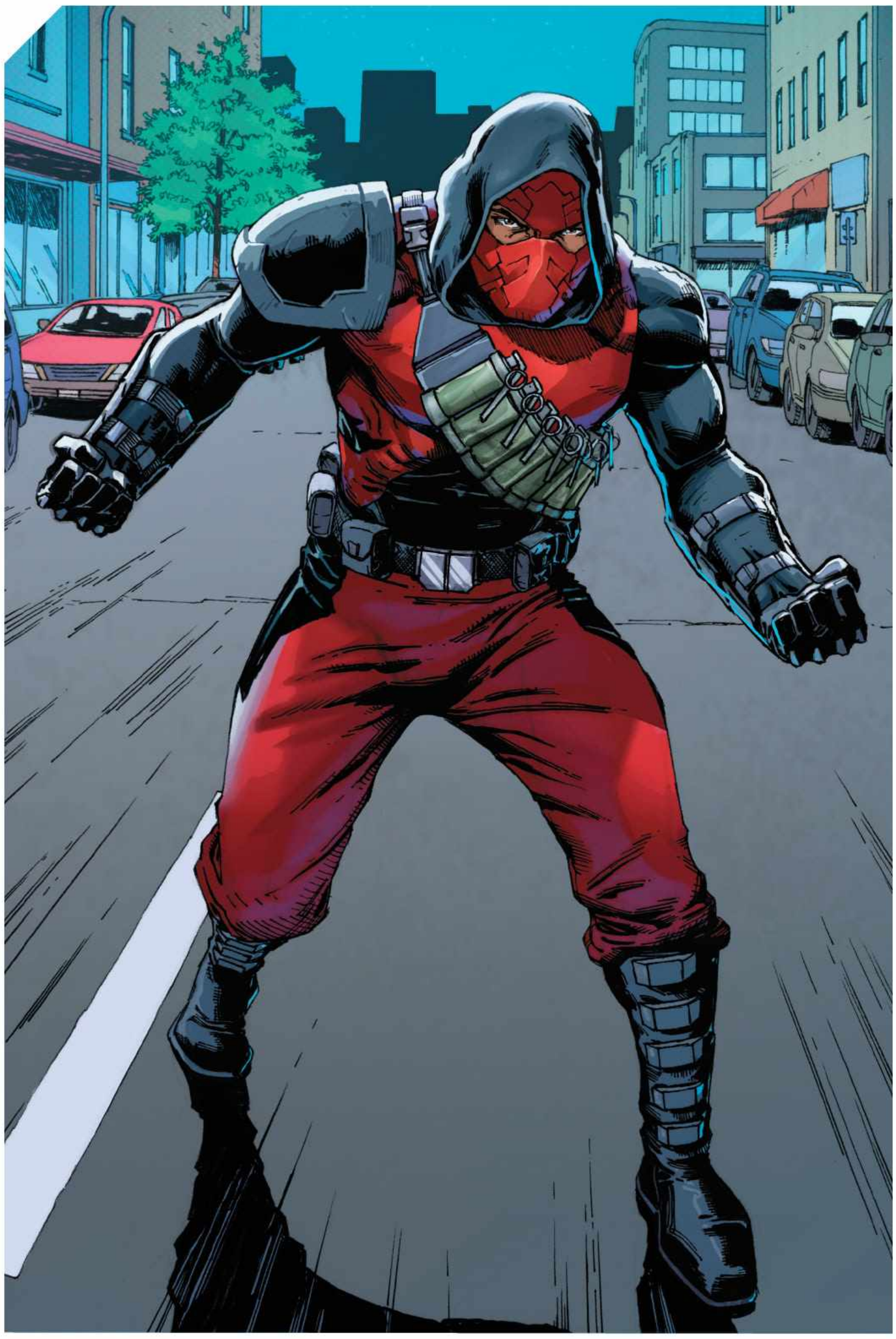
WHO IS HAYMAKER?!

Cloned from the mutant Logan, A.K.A. Wolverine, Laura Kinney was made to be the perfect weapon. With adamantium-coated claws on both hands and feet, a healing factor and heightened senses, as X-23, she more than lived up to that promise. Becoming one of the world's most sought-after assassins while still only a teenager, X-23 has been forced to kill by numerous organizations. After escaping that life, Laura joined the X-Men, eventually joining them on Utopia, the island sanctuary established as a haven for mutantkind. Seeking to understand her place in the world, X-23 has struck out on her own, hoping to find the humanity that was so long denied to her…

X-23 DEADLY REGENESIS

PREVIOUSLY...

Laura's travels brought her to Minneapolis, where she snapped into action to save innocent people from a burning building. But her efforts caught the attention of the local media, which put her back on the radar of her old handler, Kimura. Hoping to capture Laura at the behest of her employer, Kimura deployed a brawler named Jordan Gastin, A.K.A. Haymaker, to bring her in alive. But Haymaker has a personal vendetta against Laura and may be unwilling to pull their punches…



EDITOR'S NOTE: This story takes place prior to *X-23 (2010) #4*.

THE PAST HAUNTS US ALL PART 2

ERICA SCHULTZ WRITER **EDGAR SALAZAR** ARTIST **CARLOS LOPEZ** COLORIST

VC'S CORY PETIT LETTERER **KALMAN ANDRASOFSZKY** COVER ARTIST

JUNGGEUN YOON VARIANT COVER ARTIST **STACIE ZUCKER** ADDITIONAL LOGO DESIGN

DREW BAUMGARTNER ASST. EDITOR **MARK BASSO** EDITOR

JORDAN D. WHITE SENIOR EDITOR **C.B. CEBULSKI** EDITOR IN CHIEF

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BEFORE.

SOMETIMES I FORGET THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO HAD LIVES...

...BEFORE I BROUGHT THEM SO MUCH PAIN.

I DON'T CARE HOW GOOD YOU THINK THEY ARE...

...I TOLD YOU LAST TIME. JORDAN'S GOTTA PAY TO TRAIN HERE JUST LIKE EVERYONE ELSE.

AND *DON'T* TELL ME I'LL GET MY MONEY SOON. YA STILL OWE ME FOR LAST MONTH, DREW.

RELAX, MAURICE.

JORDAN GETS THE *BEST.*

THAT'S WHAT I PROMISED THEM, SO...

...THIS SHOULD COVER LAST MONTH, THIS MONTH AND THE NEXT FEW.

THIS MAKE US SQUARE?

YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, KID?

I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT THIS, BUT...

...YEAH, WE'RE SQUARE.

OOOF!

WHUD

HELL YEAH! THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKIN' ABOUT!

I'M DONE, I'M DONE, J... NO MORE.

TAKE IT EASY, MARK.

HEY, DREW.

GET 'EM TO SURRENDER BEFORE YOU CAN FINISH 'EM OFF. GOOD FOR YOU.

WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN YOU AND MAURICE? HE SOUNDED A LITTLE RILED UP.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. YOU JUST FOCUS ON YOUR TRAINING.

YOU KEEP THIS UP, AND YOU'RE GONNA BE THE TOP MMA FIGHTER IN THE WORLD.

DREW, PLEASE...

...WE PROMISED WE'D NEVER LIE TO EACH OTHER, OKAY?

JUST TELL ME...WHAT'S GOING ON?

IT'S NOTHING...

I JUST GOT A FEW SIDE GIGS WITH FRANKIE FEAR.

ARE YOU *NUTS?!* HE DID SERIOUS TIME!

RELAX, JORDAN.

IT'S NOTHING BIG, JUST A SIDE JOB. BUT IT'LL HELP SET UP A NEST EGG FOR US...Y'KNOW, BEFORE YOU MAKE THE BIG BUCKS.

I STILL DON'T LIKE IT.

I HEARD THE KINGPIN WAS MAKING A RUN ON FRANKIE'S OPERATION.

WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT?

I DUNNO... PEOPLE TALK AROUND HERE.

I WORRY ABOUT YOU, AND--

I TOLD YOU...IT'S JUST A FEW QUICK JOBS.

WHEN DO YOU START?

TONIGHT. AND I'LL BE WORKING IN THE *WAREHOUSE*, NOT AS A CORNER BOY, SO YOU CAN RELAX.

YOU NEED TO QUIT LISTENING TO GYM-RAT GOSSIP, OKAY? I'VE GOT IT ALL UNDER CONTROL.

I'M NOT A KID ANYMORE, DREW...BUT IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO YOU...

YOU'RE RIGHT...YOU'RE *NOT* A KID ANYMORE.

BUT YOU'RE STILL MY RESPONSIBILITY.

I GET WHY YOU'RE UPSET, AND I DON'T WANT YOU TO THINK I'M NOT LISTENING.

BUT SOMETIMES I'VE GOTTA DO SOME SHADY STUFF TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE SAFE...

...AND TO MAKE SURE WE GET THE FUNDS WE NEED.

WE CAN GET THE MONEY ANOTHER WAY.

I CAN'T LOSE YOU, TOO.

YOU'D NEVER LOSE ME. EVER.

NOT EVEN IF YOU WENT BACK TO YOUR EMO KID PHASE.

YOU SAID YOU'D NEVER BRING THAT--

I SAID I'D DELETE THE *PHOTOS.*

AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE MONEY...WHEN YOU GO PRO, YOU CAN PAY ME BACK!

WHEN I GO PRO, ***NO ONE'S*** GONNA TAKE ANYTHING FROM US EVER AGAIN.

NOW.

WHAT WAS I SPRAYED WITH? I CAN FEEL IT STINGING MY THROAT AND MY LUNGS.

AND IT HAS STOPPED ME FROM HEALING.

I'M SO GLAD THEY LET ME TAKE YOU.

I ALWAYS WANTED A LITTLE SISTER.

THEY WILL NOT TAKE ME.

I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS, X-23.

GNNAH!

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO WIN THIS FIGHT.

YEAH? WE'LL SEE ABOUT *THAT!*

I DO NOT WANT TO HURT YOU.

SNAKT

NO, YOU DON'T GET OFF THAT EASY.

NOT FOR WHAT YOU DID TO *HIM.*

WHO--?

BESIDES... YOU HAVEN'T *SEEN* WHAT I CAN DO!

THEY MAKE SUCH A FUSS OVER YOU, AND FOR WHAT?

C'MON, LITTLE GIRL... WE HAVEN'T SEEN WHAT YOU CAN DO.

WHAM

STRONGER THAN I ANTICIPATED.

KREEAK

BUT I CANNOT ALLOW THEM TO HURT INNOCENT BYSTANDERS.

SLICE

KERASH

I'LL BE DAMNED...SHE'S STILL ON HER FEET EVEN WITHOUT HER HEALING FACTOR.

I EXPECT NOTHING LESS FROM HER CONSIDERING WHAT THE FACILITY PUT HER THROUGH.

DAMNIT, I TOLD JORDAN NOT TO GET COCKY.

YOU SAY YOU CAN CONTROL X-23, BUT WHAT ABOUT THIS HAYMAKER?

JORDAN'S A CAKEWALK. DON'T WORRY.

"IF I CAN KEEP X-23 DOWN...

"...I CAN KEEP *ANYONE* DOWN."

FWAM

SMASH

NOW... WOULD BE AN OPPORTUNE TIME...TO HEAL.

THIS IS FOR *HIM!*

HUK!

THE HIT SENDS MY MIND BACK IN TIME...

WHAM

I FOLLOWED MY BROTHER THAT NIGHT...

...BACK BEFORE I BROUGHT PAIN TO THIS INNOCENT LIFE...

BEFORE.

"...TO SEE WHERE HE WENT.

"I WAS SO SCARED WHEN I SAW WHAT YOU DID...

"...ALL THOSE PEOPLE YOU KILLED!

"I WANTED TO RUN AWAY, BUT I HAD TO DO *SOMETHING!*"

DREW! OMIGOD.

I'M SO SORRY. I'VE GOTTA GET YOU OUTTA HERE.

÷HUK÷ J-JORDAN... G-GO...

NONONO! I WON'T LOSE YOU!

"YOU TOOK MY BROTHER FROM ME!"

NO!

HE WAS ALL I HAD, AND HE'S GONE...BECAUSE OF *YOU!*

I WAS... CONTROLLED. I HAD NO CHOICE. THE FACILITY HAD SENT ME.

I DO NOT... REMEMBER YOUR BROTHER...ONLY *KINGPIN.*

DON'T SAY THAT BASTARD'S NAME!

YOU SAY MY *BROTHER'S* NAME.

MY BROTHER WAS *DREW!*

I CAN FEEL THE RAGE WITH EVERY BLOW...

...AND I DESERVE EVERY BIT OF IT.

...BUT *YOU* DID THE KILLING!

AND YOU *TOOK HIM* FROM ME!

KINGPIN MAY HAVE ORDERED IT...

...I LET THEM GET IT OUT.

HE WAS ALL I HAD!

I...

...CAN...

...TAKE IT...

...I... MUST...

THWUMP

STAY ON TASK, JORDAN. THE CAR IS TEN METERS FROM YOU.

THIS REINFORCED ADAMANTIUM BETTER WORK.

CLAK

:HMPH: YOU WEREN'T SO HARD TO TAKE DOWN.

KIMURA OVERSOLD IT.

KACHUNK

FZZZZZ

THIS ISN'T OVER, X-23.

LATER.

KATHUNK

THAWUMP

÷UNGH...÷

I...DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG I WAS UNCONSCIOUS.

÷SNFF÷

÷SNFF÷

I CANNOT MAKE OUT A SCENT.

BUT WE ARE NO LONGER IN THE CITY.

TOO MUCH GASOLINE AND OIL.

THIS WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST NIGHT I SPENT IN THE TRUNK OF A CAR.

THIS IS IT... THIS IS THE PAYDAY, Y'ALL.

REMEMBER, WE GOTTA LAY LOW FOR A BIT.

'SIDES, IT'LL TAKE TIME TO LINE UP A BUYER.

WE CAN STILL CELEBRATE A LITTLE, RIGHT?

GAH!

SNIKT

RRRIPPPPP

RARH!

NONONO!

KRUNCH

SHNK

KABOOM

STATUS REPORT, X.

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, KIMURA.

I DID WHAT YOU SAID. SHE'S HURT, BUT SHE'S NOT DEAD.

GOOD JOB, JORDAN.

THWUMP

HEYA, X-23...READY TO LIVE UP TO YOUR POTENTIAL?

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT...

X-23 DEADLY REGENESIS #3

Kimura wants X-23 back under her control, and with a few surprises up her sleeve, she might just get what she wants! Will Laura find a way out, or will Kimura pull her strings once more?

ZONE